

# While Prescription Opioid Exposures among Young Children have Decreased, they Continue to Pose a Threat

Study finds buprenorphine exposures among young children on the rise

**\*Note: Embargoed until Monday March 20, 2017 at 12:01 a.m. eastern**

Nationwide Children's Hospital

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## NEWS PACKAGE



<p><b>SUGGESTED TEASE</b></p> <p><b>ANCHOR LEAD</b></p> <p><b>(PACKAGE START) -----</b></p> <p><b>CG: Courtesy: Nationwide Children's Hospital</b> <b>:00 - :03</b></p> <p>Shots of pharmacy</p> <p>Shots of poison control operator</p> <p><b>CG: Gary Smith, MD, DrPH</b> <b>Nationwide Children's Hospital</b></p> <p>Shots of Dr. Smith in office</p> <p>Exterior of hospital</p> <p>Wide shot-poison control (blur)</p>	<p>STILL TO COME, THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC AND THE RISK IT POSES TO <i>CHILDREN</i>. DETAILS OF A NEW STUDY, NEXT.</p> <hr/> <p>IN THE TIME IT TAKES ME TO FINISH THIS SENTENCE, 53 MORE PRESCRIPTIONS FOR <a href="#">OPIOIDS</a> WERE JUST FILLED IN THE UNITED STATES.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>THE EXTENSIVE USE AND ABUSE OF PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS HAS BEEN CALLED AN EPIDEMIC IN THIS COUNTRY.</p> <p>AND WHILE THE PROBLEM IN ADULTS HAS RECEIVED LOTS OF NEWS COVERAGE, THE EFFECTS ON CHILDREN HAVE NOT RECEIVED THE ATTENTION THEY DESERVE.</p> <p>BUT AS CLARK POWELL SHOWS US, A NEW STUDY IS SHEDDING LIGHT ON THE ISSUE.</p> <hr/> <p>(Nats - Pharmacy pills) :02</p> <p>PHARMACIES FILL MORE THAN <a href="#">650-THOUSAND</a> PRESCRIPTIONS<sup>1</sup> FOR OPIOIDS <u>EACH DAY</u> IN THIS COUNTRY. :05</p> <p>(Nat sound - answering phone) :02</p> <p>AND INCREASINGLY, CALLS ARE COMING IN TO POISON CONTROL HOTLINES BECAUSE OF THEM. :03</p> <p><i>"In this study, we found that poison control centers in the United States receive a call every 45 minutes for a child that has been exposed to opioid medications."</i> :09</p> <p>THAT STUDY WAS CONDUCTED BY RESEARCHERS AT THE CENTER FOR INJURY RESEARCH AND POLICY AND THE CENTRAL OHIO POISON CENTER AT NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.</p> <p>IT ANALYZED CALLS TO U.S. POISON CONTROL CENTERS BETWEEN 2000 AND 2015 - AND FOUND A</p>
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<p>Graph - 2000-2015 One line up to '09 then down Another line continuing up</p> <p><b>CG: Marcel Casavant, MD</b> <b>Nationwide Children's Hospital</b></p> <p>Shots of pharmacist getting drug Close up shots of Suboxone GoPro shot of pharmacist getting bottle</p> <p><b>Dr. Casavant (CG'd earlier)</b></p> <p>Shot - loose pills into bottle Shot of opening blister pack</p> <p><b>Dr. Smith (CG'd earlier)</b></p> <p>Shot of pharmacy</p> <p><b>(PACKAGE END)</b> ----- <b>ANCHOR TAG</b></p>	<p>SHARP INCREASE RELATED TO OPIOIDS INITIALLY, BUT A DROP SINCE 2009 -- WITH ONE NOTABLE EXCEPTION.<sup>2</sup> :20</p> <p><i>"We saw a pretty significant increase among young children getting into medications that are used to treat opiate dependence. Buprenorphine, in particular, had a significant increase in exposures to young children."</i> :12</p> <p>DRUGS LIKE BUPRENORPHINE OR SUBOXONE, ARE ESPECIALLY DANGEROUS. THEY ARE PRIMARILY USED TO HELP PEOPLE ADDICTED TO HEROIN OR OTHER OPIOIDS, BUT THEY CAN BE DANGEROUS IF THEY GET INTO THE HANDS OF CHILDREN. :10</p> <p><i>"When children get exposed to buprenorphine, if mom or dad sees it happening and they take the pill out of the child's mouth, their child can still go into a coma and stop breathing many hours later."</i> :12</p> <p>EXPERTS ARE CALLING FOR INCREASED PREVENTION EFFORTS TO BETTER PROTECT CHILDREN, INCLUDING CHANGES IN HOW THESE PILLS ARE PACKAGED. INSTEAD OF LOOSE PILLS IN BOTTLES, THEY SUGGEST INCREASED USE OF BLISTER PACKS OR SINGLE-DOSE PACKAGING LIKE THIS. :13</p> <p><i>"Keep these things up, away and out of sight. Preferably in a locked location so they can't get access to them."</i> :07</p> <p>AT NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL, THIS IS CLARK POWELL REPORTING. :03</p> <hr/> <p>WHILE CHILDREN YOUNGER THAN SIX YEARS OF AGE ACCOUNTED FOR THE MOST EXPOSURES, IT FOUND TEENAGERS ARE ALSO AT RISK.</p> <p>THE RATE OF SUSPECTED SUICIDE DUE TO PRESCRIPTION OPIOID EXPOSURE AMONG TEENAGERS ROSE NEARLY 53 PERCENT OVER THE 16-YEAR STUDY PERIOD.<sup>2</sup></p>
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**SOCIAL MEDIA**

<p> <b>Share it! Suggested tweet:</b></p> <p> <b>Suggested post:</b></p>	<p>Study <a href="https://twitter.com/nationwidekids">@nationwidekids</a> shows children are vulnerable to opioid exposure. <a href="http://bit.ly/2lvMAMr">http://bit.ly/2lvMAMr</a></p> <hr/> <p>With more than 650,000 prescriptions dispensed <i>each day</i>, the extensive use and abuse of prescription opioids is considered an epidemic in this country. And children are at high risk of exposure, according to a new study out</p>
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	<p>of the Center for Injury Research and Policy and the Central Ohio Poison Center at <a href="#">Nationwide Children's Hospital</a>. See how these medications are proving dangerous to children and what experts would like to see change: <a href="http://bit.ly/2lvMAMr">http://bit.ly/2lvMAMr</a></p>
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**EXTRA BITES**

<p><b>CG: Marcel Casavant, MD</b> Nationwide Children's Hospital</p>	<p>Casavant talks about the proliferation of opioid use: <i>"The number of prescriptions, the number of prescription opioids and the number of households with drugs have increased."</i></p> <p>Casavant talks about buprenorphine: <i>"It's used to take care of people with opiate addiction and to keep them from having relapses and craving and withdrawal symptoms. Wonderful medicine for that group of people but extremely dangerous to toddlers."</i></p> <p>Casavant talks about the risk buprenorphine poses to children: <i>"Unfortunately that safety measure doesn't translate to children though. When children get exposed to buprenorphine it's very dangerous."</i></p> <hr/> <p>Smith talks about the trend with buprenorphine: <i>"One medication in particular, buprenorphine, which is used often to treat opioid addiction, has been on the rise and especially is affecting young children."</i></p> <p>Smith discusses the age of children exposed most often: <i>"Children younger than six years of age accounted for almost ninety percent of these exposures. And of those children, more than half required admission to the hospital."</i></p> <p>Smith explains the issues with opioid prescriptions: <i>"Eighty percent of the opioid prescriptions worldwide are distributed right here in the United States. And as the use of these medications has increased, so has exposure among young children."</i></p> <p>Smith calls for change in the packaging of opioids: <i>"There are a number strategies that we can use to prevent exposures to young children to opioid medications. One of the ones that we haven't used enough is the use of blister packs or what is often called unit dose packaging."</i></p>
<p><b>CG: Gary Smith, MD, DrPH</b> Nationwide Children's Hospital</p>	

**References**

<p><sup>1</sup><i>The Opioid Epidemic: By The Numbers</i>, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, June 2016. Online: <a href="https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/Factsheet-opioids-061516.pdf">https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/Factsheet-opioids-061516.pdf</a></p>
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<sup>2</sup>*Prescription Opioid Exposures among Children and Adolescents in the United States: 2000-2015*,  
**Pediatrics, March 20, 2017.** Online: [put link here](#).

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